

Professional paper

Aleksandra D. Pavić Panić¹
Tehnoart, Belgrade



Paper received: Jun 28 2016
Paper accepted: Sep 20 2016
Article Published: May 5 2017

The concept of English as a lingua franca (ELF) and its role in creating language education policies in Europe

Extended summary

This paper deals with English as a worldlingua franca and its impact on making language policies in Europe. English has been becoming an international language and a basis of communication at a global level, so it holds first place as a foreign language in many European countries. Although language education policies in Europe promote plurilingualism and cultural diversity (The Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe, 2003), the dominance of English, both as a lingua franca and foreign language, is obvious.

The methods of description, critical analysis and synthesis have been used in this qualitative research. Our aim has been to show the part that English as a lingua franca plays in producing European language policies, through the brief overview of relevant works.

First, the spread of English as a consequence of globalization, information technology development and need for lifelong learning and prosperity is discussed. For the first time one language – English is used at a global level, and whereas the use of English is increasing, the figures of other languages are going down. According to some authors, that dominance can affect preservation of language with a small number of speakers, and they have used the metaphor Trojan Horse to refer to English as the language of imperialism. Crystal (1997) does not agree with such allusion, pointing out that three-quarters of English vocabulary are loanwords from over 120 different languages, which should mean that there are over 120 “Trojan horses” inside English. He notes that we must always be alert to the potential danger of language imperialism, but at the same time, we must not overstate it.

¹ aleksandra.pavic@gmail.com

Copyright © 2016 by the authors, licensee [Teacher Education Faculty](#) University of Belgrade, SERBIA.

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original paper is accurately cited.

Certain researchers (Filipović, 2009; Crystal, 2006; 2001; 2000; 1997; House, 2003; Fishman, 1977) have arrived at the conclusion that English as a lingua franca is not a threat to multilingualism and it can even promote it. It can also provide greater mobility for learning and working in Europe and participation in all public spheres. People and institutions from different countries can now share ideas and solve some global problems through the medium of English. Some studies emphasize the importance of being acquainted with the models of using ELF as a global, intermediary language in promoting other languages and cultures in Europe. For instance, in Germany English has been used in tertiary education as the sole medium of instruction or alongside German, which has been proved as a successful attempt to internationalize German universities, attract more foreign students and promote the German language and culture (House, 2003).

Further, on, the paper indicates that language education policies should be open and flexible, they should encourage linguistic and cultural diversity and therefore, they should recognize and implement effective multilingual models. It is also implied that pure enthusiasm is not enough to achieve these goals, political will and financial resources are necessary, too. However, it must be added that the Council of Europe is aware that dominant languages, like English, can pose a threat to minority languages and may prevent the language policies of Europe to produce a multilingual society, where all languages are equal and worth learning.

In practical terms, this theoretical investigation can be useful to language education policy makers and language acquisition management, when revising existing language policies in order to develop a multilingual perspective for all educational institutions, which can further lead to the promotion of tolerance and diversity, enabling all people to live in a world of growing heterogeneity. Theoretically, our paper may help future researchers in this field.

Key words: English as a lingua franca (ELF), language education policies, diversity.

References

- Audigier, F. (1999). Basic Concepts and core competencies for education for democratic citizenship. DGIV/EDU/CIT (2000) 23. Document CDCC /Delphes (99) 4. Online <http://www.coe.int> (Education). In: Breidbach, S. (2003). *Plurilingualism, democratic citizenship in Europe and the role of English* (1–24). Conference on Languages, diversity, citizenship: policies for plurilingualism in Europe, Strasbourg, 13–15 November, 2002. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Beacco, J. C. & Byram, M. (2002). Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe: From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education, Strasbourg, Council of Europe (Executive Version). In: Neuner, G. (Ed.). *Policy approaches to English* (2002). Strasbourg: Language Policy Division.
- Breidbach, S. (2003). *Plurilingualism, democratic citizenship in Europe and the role of English* (1–24). Conference on Languages, diversity, citizenship: policies for plurilingualism in Europe, Strasbourg, 13–15 November, 2002. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Brumfit, C. (Ed.) (1982). *English for International Communication*. Oxford: Pergamon.

-
- Carmichael, C. (2000). Conclusions: Language and National Identity in Europe. In: Barbour, S. & Carmichael, C. (Eds.) *Language and Nationalism in Europe* (280–289). Oxford: Oxford University Press. In: Breidbach, S. (2003). *Plurilingualism, democratic citizenship in Europe and the role of English* (1–24). Conference on Languages, diversity, citizenship: policies for plurilingualism in Europe, Strasbourg, 13–15 November, 2002. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
 - Council of Europe (2003). Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe: From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education. Executive version. www.coe.int/lang (Language Policies). In: Breidbach, S. (2003). *Plurilingualism, democratic citizenship in Europe and the role of English* (1–24). Conference on Languages, diversity, citizenship: policies for plurilingualism in Europe, Strasbourg, 13–15 November, 2002. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
 - Crystal, D. (1997). *Language: medium, barrier, or Trojan horse?* (Contribution to: Cultural Diplomacy at the Crossroads: Cultural Relations in Europe and the Wider World, Wilton House, 26 November, 1997). Retrieved December 12, 2014. from: <http://www.davidcrystal.community.librios.com>
 - Crystal, D. (2000). *The future of English as a World Language*. Retrieved December 12, 2014. from: <http://www.davidcrystal.community.librios.com>.
 - Crystal, D. (2001). *Languages on the Internet*. Retrieved December 12, 2014. from: <http://www.davidcrystal.community.librios.com>.
 - Crystal, D. (2003). *Crossing the Great Divide: Language Endangerment and Public Awareness*. (Keynote Speech to the International Expert Meeting on Endangered Languages, UNESCO, Paris, 10 March, 2003). Retrieved December 12, 2014. from: <http://www.davidcrystal.community.librios.com>.
 - Crystal, D. (2006). *Towards a philosophy of language management*. (Keynote paper at the conference *Integrating Content and Language in Higher education*, Maastricht, 28 June, 2006). Retrieved December 12, 2014. from: <http://www.davidcrystal.community.librios.com>.
 - Đolić, S. (2013). *Globalizacija i menadžment u nastavi stranih jezika: Engleski jezik na početku III milenijuma*. Kosovska Mitrovica: Filozofski fakultet.
 - Filipović, J. (2009). *Moć reči. Ogledi iz kritičke sociolingvistike*. Beograd: Zadužbina Andrejević.
 - Fishman, J. A. (1997). English in the context of international societal bilingualism. In: Fishman, J. A., Cooper, R. & Conrad, A. (Eds.) *The Spread of English* (329–336). Rowley, Massachusetts: Newsbury House. In: House, J. (2003). English as a lingua franca: A threat to multilingualism?. *Journal of sociolinguistics*. 7 (4), 556–578.
 - House, J. (2003). English as a lingua franca: A threat to multilingualism?. *Journal of sociolinguistics*. 7 (4), 556–578.
 - Huber, L. (1998). Lingua franca und Gemeinsprache. Gehört zur Allgemeinen Bildung eine gemeinsame Sprache? In: Breidbach, S. (2003). *Plurilingualism, democratic citizenship in Europe and the role of English* (1–24). Conference on Languages, diversity, citizenship: policies for plurilingualism in Europe, Strasbourg, 13–15 November, 2002. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
-

-
- Janssen, H. (1999). Linguistic dominance or acculturation – problems of teaching English as a global language. In: Gnutzmann, C. (Ed.) *Teaching and Learning English as a Global Language, Native and Non-Native Perspectives* (41–55). Tübingen: Stauffenburg. In: Breidbach, S. (2003). *Plurilingualism, democratic citizenship in Europe and the role of English* (1–24). Conference on Languages, diversity, citizenship: policies for plurilingualism in Europe, Strasbourg, 13–15 November, 2002. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
 - Neuner, G. (2002). *Policy approaches to English*. Strasbourg: Language Policy Division.
 - Raasch, A. (1999). Breaking down borders – through languages. In: Krumm, H.-J. (Ed.). *The Languages of our Neighbours – our Languages* (78–91). Proceedings of the Symposium, Vienna 29. 10–31. 10. 1998. Vienna: Eviva. In: Breidbach, S. (2003). *Plurilingualism, democratic citizenship in Europe and the role of English* (1–24). Conference on Languages, diversity, citizenship: policies for plurilingualism in Europe, Strasbourg, 13–15 November, 2002. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
 - Seidlhofer, B. (2003). *A concept of International English and related issues: from 'real English' to 'realistic English'?*. Language Policy Division, DG-IV-Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education, Council of Europe.